

TWO
SERMONS,

PREACH'D IN

BIDDEFORD,

October the 2d, 1720.

Being the Lord's-Day after the Interment
of the Reverend

Mr. *WILLIAM BARTLET*,

MINISTER in that Town,

Who died suddenly.

WITH A

PREFATORY EPISTLE,

RELATING TO

A Christian's Conduct,

When afflicted with the SUDDEN DEATH of
a Dear RELATION.

By *BENJAMIN WILLS.*

E X O N:

Printed by *ANDREW BRICE*, in *Southgate-street.*
MDCCLXXII.

STEWART
SERMONS
PREACHED IN
BIRMINGHAM
ON THE 17th
OF THE MONTH



A Christmas Sermon
Preached at the Baptist Church
on the 25th of December 1854

By F. W. M. M. M.

E. L. O. M.

Printed by Andrew Paton, in Birmingham.
MCCCLIV



THE
PREFATORY EPISTLE.

TO
M^{RS.} *Honor Wills*, the Relict,
AND
M^{RS.} *Mary Wills*, the Sister,
OF
Mr. JOSEPH WILLS, of Exon,
Lately Deceas'd.

DEAR SISTERS,



THE following SERMONS (altho' earnestly desir'd by many) might never have appear'd in this publick Manner, had they not been judg'd suitable to our melancholy Circumstances, (as well as useful and instructive in General) who have been lately visit'd with a very mournful and afflicting Providence; I mean the Death of a dear and pious Relation, who drop'd down in his Garden, and breath'd

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his last. But as a Sparrow does not, much less does the Body of a good Man fall to the Ground without our Heavenly Father. And sudden Death (as will appear in some Part of the ensuing Discourse) is no Disadvantage to a prepared Soul. Our Blessed Saviour was in an Agony in the Garden, and by his Bloody Sweat and Passion (in a manner) consecrated and perfum'd the Inclosure, and turn'd it into a sacred Dormitory, and a Bed of Spices.

When a Relation is taken ill on a sudden, and dies at a Distance from Humane Aid and Assistance, we are prone to repine and say, that if such a Friend, or such a Physician had been present with him when he was first seiz'd, Life might have been preserved: But this is to talk like one of the foolish Women, as Martha said unto Jesus, Joh. xi. 8. 21. Lord, If thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died. But who art thou, O Woman, that thou shouldest dispute with thy Maker? It is the Will of God, and that should satisfy thee. And why, O vain Man, dost thou darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge? For if longer Life had been appointed, Means had not been wanting, or God himself, with whom all Things are possible, would have spoken the healing Word, saying, Be thou sound and whole! Rise and live! But no matter how or where the Body falls, when the Soul is dress'd and ready, and takes Wing for the Regions of Glory. No matter where a good Man drops, whether in the House or in the Field; for he is not alone, because the Father is with him; and a shining Guard of Angels attend, at the Command of the Supreme King, to convey the departing Spirit into Abraham's Bosom, and carry it safely and swiftly to that Rest which remaineth for the People of God. Psal. xxiii. 4. Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil; For thou art with me; thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.

The Day before his Departure, he celebrated a Sabbath here with the Church Militant on Earth: And, (O glorious Charge! O happy Translation!) soon after he joins the Church Triumphant in Heaven. In how short

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short a Time does he pass from the Temple below, where he saw Christ thro' a Glass darkly, to the Temple above, where he sees him as he is, and beholds his Glory! But tho' the Suddenness of the Stroke might be an Act of Favour to him, yet it is peculiarly awful and shocking to surviving Relatives, and calls for deep Reflection and a suitable Improvement. Not that we should sink under the Burden, or give our selves over to a fretful Impatience and disconsolate Sorrow, but look up with humble Submission to the Hand that gave the Blow, bow to the Sovereignty of Heaven, and acknowledge that God is righteous, and can do no Wrong to any of his Creatures. Let us consider, that the very Hairs of our Heads are all number'd, and that God does every Thing justly and wisely, and for the Good of them that love him, and are the Called according to his Purpose.

Suffer (my Dear Sisters) a Word of Exhortation. And the Advice I shall offer you I would also charge home upon my self, as nearly concern'd in the late surprising and afflictive Providence.

(1.) Humble your selves under the mighty Hand of God, and learn Instruction under the Discipline of Heaven.

(2.) Suppress the turbulent Passions, and in Patience possess ye your Souls.

(3.) Sorrow not even as others who have no Hope.

(4.) Prepare to follow.

(1.) Humble your selves under the mighty Hand of God, and learn Instruction under the Discipline of Heaven. We must not think that we are too good to be corrected, or that we have done nothing amiss, but be sensible of our Follies and Miscarriages, justify our Maker and Sovereign, lie low before God, and stand in Awe and sin not. David could say, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. Psal. cxix. 71. We should not

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not despise the Chastning of the Lord, but be suitably affected with it, study Reformation and Improvement, and grow wiser and better under the Rebukes of our heavenly Father. We should carefully attend to the silent Lectures of the Cross, hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it, and consider the important Message it brings, and chearfully obey the awakening and instructive Voice. The bitter Cup which we have been called to drink of (if we are not wanting to our selves) may be medicinal, and purge out the ill Humours of Sin, work off the Dregs of earthly Affections, brighten our Graces, and purify and refine all the Powers of the Soul. If a pleasant Stream be stop'd, we should repair to the Fountain: If we are depriv'd of a dying Comfort, we should trust more in the Living God, who is the Strength of our Heart, and our Portion for ever. If Earth be imbittered to us, our Souls should dwell more in Heaven, and, with greater Zeal and Ardour, seek those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the Right Hand of God.

The all-wise Governour of the World does not without just Cause and Reason grieve the Children of Men. He designs us no Harm by laying his afflicting Hand upon us, but aims at our Benefit and Advantage. Therefore we should kiss the Rod, and learn Instruction, and apply our Hearts unto Wisdom. For, as the Author to the Hebrews argues, We have had Fathers of our Flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence: Shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few Days chastened us after their own Pleasure; but he, for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness. *Heb. xii. 9, 10.*

(2.) Suppress the turbulent Passions, and in Patience possess ye your Souls.

Let not the Soul be all in a Ruffle; Do not quarrel with your Maker, or disquiet your selves in vain. Son of Man, (says God to the Prophet) behold, I take away from thee the Desire of thine Eyes with a Stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn, nor weep, neither shall thy Tears run down.

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down. Ezek. xxiv. 16. *When Aaron had his two Sons cut off by a sudden and untimely Death, he held his Peace.* Lev. x. 3. *And Aaron held his Peace. He does not grow stormy and outrageous, or open his Mouth in indecent Reflections upon God, and his Providence, but was calm and silent. It is not for poor Dust to strive with the Almighty, or for a Worm to contend with Jehovah.*

Govern your Passions. Be still and know that he is God. For who hath resisted his Will? Who can controul his Power; or who dare say to him, What dost Thou?

When David's Child was sick, he fasted and wept; but when he hear'd the Child was dead, he rose up, and eat, and said, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

2. Sam. xii. 23. *And could you fill the Air with Volumes of Sighs and Groans, and weep Tears of Blood, it would not alter the Course of Divine Providence, revoke the Decree of Heaven, or bring back the Dead Body from the Grave, or the departed Soul from the Invisible World.*

It must be allowed, that Christianity was never design'd to transform us into Stocks and Stones, or to extinguish and destroy the Natural Affections, but to regulate and moderate them. We may mourn, but not murmur; we may drop a few friendly Tears over the Hearse of a beloved Relative; but then we must take heed we do not arraign the Divine Conduct, or charge God foolishly. Our Sorrow should be a moderate, silent, and submissive Sorrow.

Strive to govern the Passion of Grief, guard against violent Transports, and chase away all those black, melancholy, and desponding Thoughts, as would unbinge the Mind, untune the Heart for Duty, distract the Soul, and raise a Mutiny within. Let not the Tide swell too high, break Bounds, and overflow its Banks; But keep it under the Government of Reason, and the Controul of serious Religion. If at any Time you perceive the Storm begins to rise in your Breast, call in all the Powers of Faith to check and suppress it.

Endeavour to keep all within as quiet as possible; Say to the Tumultuous Waves, Peace, be still! that you may with Calmness and a due Decorum discharge the Duties of your general and particular Calling.

3. Sorrow

(3) Sorrow not even as others, who have no Hope.

Let not your Sorrow run into Despair. Christ by his Gospel hath brought Life and Immortality to Light. He hath revealed the Felicities of a Future State, and open'd vast Scenes of Glory to our View. As for the Soul, that never dies, and the Body shall rise again. Math. xxii. 32. I am (says God) the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living.

When our pious Friends are remov'd by Death, we must not think that they are separated from us for ever, or that we shall never see them more, much less that they are laid up in eternal Obscurity, and removed out of Being. No, they are not lost, but gone before: When they die out of this World, they go to a better, where they live at a nobler Rate, look like Creatures of an higher Order and Quality, and resemble the Angels in unspotted Purity, Seraphick Love, and extatick Raptures of Joy; where like Angels they see the Face of God, and are satisfied with the Light of his Countenance. Math. v. 8. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God. Psal. xvi. 11. In thy Presence is Fulness of Joy; at thy Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.

And their Bodies, those vile impotent Pieces of Clay, which are deposited in the Grave, are laid up there only for a Time; and shall sleep in the Dust only till the Morning of the Resurrection, when they shall awake in broad and open Day, be raised up in exquisite Beauty, and put on Robes of Glory and Immortality. 1. Thess. iv. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,

And how bright and amiable will the Bodies of the Saints appear at the great Rising-Day, when a chearful Air shall sparkle in the Countenance, and a spiritual Vigour diffuse it self through all the Parts; when they shall shine as the Sun in the Firmament, excel in Strength, be swift in Motion, and incorruptible in Being.

(4.) Prepare

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(4.) Prepare to follow.

O the uncertain State of Mortals here below ! O the sudden and melancholy Changes which happen in this miserable World ! In the midst of Life, we are in Death. We see upon what slippery Ground we stand ; the Judge is at the Door ; Let us not loiter or trifle, or indulge Pleasure and Security, presuming that our Lord delayeth his Coming, lest coming suddenly he should find us sleeping.

The awful Providence before us should awaken our Diligence, excite our Watchfulness, and quicken our Preparations. He being dead, yet speaketh. He calls to us (as it were) out of his Grave, saying, Math. xxiv. 44. Be ye also ready ; for in such an Hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

Your Breath is in your Nostrils, and may be stop'd in a Moment. The next Pulse may be your last, and beat a Surrender to the King of Terrors. The next Voice you hear may be a Voice from God, to bid you come away, and give up your great Account.

Make ready for the solemn Day and Hour. Consider your latter End ; wait 'till your Change come. Let the Soul be deck'd and adorn'd as a Bride to meet her heavenly Bridegroom. Haste, and make your Peace with God, through the Blood of Jesus ; wash by Faith in the Fountain set open for Sin and Uncleaness ; put on your Wedding Garments ; trim your Lamps, and take Oil in your Vessels with your Lamps.

Finally, let your Loins be girded about, and your Lights burning : Throw off all Clogs and Incumbrances. Disintangle your selves from whatever might hinder you in your important Journey. Get loose from an enchanting World. Polish your Graces, and brighten your Evidences for Heaven ; and then, when Christ says, Lo, I come ! the dress'd and ready Soul may echo back, Even so come Lord Jesus ! Come quickly. Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Bether.

I am

Your Sympathizing

and Affectionate BROTHER,

B

Benjamin Wills.



P O S T - S C R I P T.

Having had a long and intimate Acquaintance with the Revd. Mr. William Bartlet, Minister in Biddeford, it was the Request of his surviving Consort, and other Relations, that I should the Lord's Day after his Interment preach his Funeral Sermon; and being to undertake the Service of the whole Day, what I delivered on the mournful Occasion is contain'd in the following Discourses. The visible Concern, and affecting Sorrow, which generally appear'd in the Hearers, when this Solemnity was perform'd, shew'd how they loved him.

May his Memory be precious to the People who were once his Charge, and his heavenly Doctrine engraven in indelible Characters upon their Minds, and shine forth in all the Beauties of an holy Conversation, that the World may know a Prophet hath been among them.

May my worthy Brethren who are enter'd into his Labours go on, and prosper in the Work of the Lord, and build a large and fair Superstructure upon the good Foundation that hath been laid; and may many Souls, by their sacred Ministrations, attended with a Divine Blessing, be added to the Church, even such as shall be saved. Which is the hearty Prayer of

Their Fellow-Servant

in the Gospel of Christ,

B. W.





Two Funeral-Discourses

For the late REVEREND

Mr. *William Bartlet*. S. 8.

JOHN xi. 61.

Then said Thomas (which is called Didymus) unto his Fellow-Disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.



T is with an aking Heart I now appear in this Pulpit, considering that my endeared Friend and Brother, and your excellent Pastor, is remov'd from it, and *the Eye which hath seen him shall see him here no more forever.* Oh! heavy Stroke! Oh! severe Dispensation! Who can reflect upon it without a Sigh or a Tear! Is such a Friend, and such a Minister, dead and gone?— Surely Life is now less amiable, and Death more desirable.— *Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

BUT, to wipe off our Tears, let us consider, that our Loss is his Gain. He is gone to reap the Fruit of his Labours, and to *enter into the Joy of his Lord*. And shall we, by an intemperate Sorrow, manifest an unkind Inclination to snatch him from the Embraces of his Dear Redeemer, and call him back again to a sinful, wretched, and miserable World? Is he dead? Certainly, No! It is true, the Body is committed to the Dust, until the Morning of a blessed Resurrection; but his Better Part, the bright Immortal Soul, the unseen Vital Substance, is gone up to GOD, and lives and reigns above, deck'd with Beams of Heavenly Light, and dress'd in Robes of spotless Glory. And our grand Work is to be guided and influenc'd by his Doctrine, and imitate his shining Example, considering the End of his Conversation. Our Business is, to prepare to follow, to trim our Lamps, and put on our Wedding-Garment: And when the Soul is dress'd and ready, let us with humble Submission to the Sovereignty of Heaven, be willing *to go and die with him*. Let us *then* be willing to go and see him in that Divine Immortal World, where, when once we meet, we shall never part more. *Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his Fellow-Disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him.*

IN this Chapter we have a signal Instance of the Redeemer's Power over the Invisible World, in calling a Person from the State of the Dead into a new Life, and second Abode here upon Earth. The Person rais'd from the Dead was *Lazarus*. Christ saith to his Disciples, ver. 11. *Our Friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of Sleep*. And, ver. 14. he tells them plainly that *Lazarus is dead*. But tho' (according to the History of the Evangelist) *Lazarus* had been dead Four Days, and the Body in so long a Time might be supposed to be putred and corrupt, as his Sister said, *Lord by this Time he stinketh*; yet Christ no sooner utters his all-commanding Voice,
Lazarus,

LAZARUS, *come forth!* but he that was dead came forth, and feels the Springs of Life restored to their wonted Strength and Vigour, *ver. 43, 44.*

As this was one of the last, so it was one of the brightest, and most illustrious Miracles our Saviour wrought, and carried in it the clearest and most convincing Evidence of his DIVINITY. This plainly shew'd that he was, what he declar'd Himself to be, the True MESSIAH, the SON of GOD, of the same Nature and Essence with the FATHER. He, who could controul and countermand the establish'd Laws of Nature, and raise a Man from his Grave, after he had been dead Four Days, must needs be GOD, as well as MAN: For, *Who can raise the Dead but God only?*

THE History of *Lazarus's* Sickness, Death, and Resurrection from the Dead, is attended with several remarkable Circumstances. When *Lazarus* fell sick at *Bethany*, Jesus being at a Distance, his Sisters, *Martha* and *Mary*, sent a Messenger to him, to give him Notice of it, saying, *Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick,* *ver. 3.* But tho' *Lazarus* was one whom Jesus loved, a peculiar Favourite, yet he delays, and makes no Haste to come to him, 'till his Sickness proved Mortal, and he was dead Four Days; and that for this Reason, that he might manifest his Almighty Power in raising him from the Dead, and Men might be excited from thence to honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER.

At length Christ tells his Disciples, he would take a Journey into *Judea*, and visit *Lazarus*; and tho' he had slept the Sleep of Death, he was glad, for their sakes, he was not present with him: For he would go and awake him out of Sleep; and so give them a fresh Instance of his being the MESSIAH, the Great Saviour of the World—Then said Jesus unto them plainly, *Lazarus is dead:—And I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there [to the Intent ye may believe]; Nevertheless, let*

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us go unto him— Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, let us also go, that we may die with him.

THESE Words, at first View, seem to look like the Language of Incredulity, as if *Thomas* did scarce believe that *Christ* was going to awake *Lazarus* out of his Sleep, or to raise him from the Dead. And seeing he was gone off the Stage of this Life, and he did not expect to see him here again any more forever, he is willing to go the same Way, and to make after him. And being perswaded that his Fellow-Disciples were Lovers of *Lazarus* as well as himself, he calls upon them to take the same Journey, hoping for an happy Meeting in a better World: *Let us go, that we may die with him:* ‘ Is so Great and Good a Man departed, ‘ our intimate and agreeable Companion, and a fast ‘ Friend to *Christ* and his Followers? Life is not ‘ now worth enjoying! Therefore let us quit the Stage, ‘ retire and begone. Seeing our common Patron, our ‘ kind and gracious Benefactor, and a Person so truly ‘ Worthy and Valuable, hath left our World; let us ‘ also leave the Tabernacle of the Body, that we may ‘ converse with him in the Kingdom of Light and ‘ Love. — Let us go and die like him; let us die in ‘ Peace with *GOD*, and in Favour with *JESUS*; let ‘ us die with the same glorious Hopes, and bright Prospects of an happy Immortality: *Let me die the Death ‘ of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.*— Then said *Thomas* (which is called *Didymus*) to his Fellow-Disciples, *let us also go, that we may die with him.*

THAT I may accommodate my Discourse on this Subject to the mournful Occasion,

I. I SHALL give you briefly the Character of *Lazarus*.

II. SHEW, that Good Men, that the Friends and Disciples of *Christ Jesus*, must die as well as others.

III. Enquire

III. ENQUIRE, in what respects it is so very desirable to die with Good Men, to die with the Friends and Disciples of Jesus; or to die like them, in the same Condition, and with the same happy Circumstances.

IV. *Ult.* APPLY the whole.

I. THEN, I shall give you, briefly, the Character of *Lazarus*.

AND as for the Character of *Lazarus*, He was a Disciple of Jesus, inviolably attach'd to his Interest, and one who manifested an uncommon Zeal & Affection for his Lord and Master. He frequently invited our Saviour to his House, and thought it an high Honour to entertain so Divine a Guest, and took a peculiar Pleasure in his Company and Conversation, and in attending to those gracious Words which proceeded out of his Mouth. *Lazarus* was a Worthy Good Man, Eminent for Piety and Charity; a Man of an Excellent Spirit, and Publickly useful in the World. He was one that served God, and his Generation according to the Will of God. He was one that used Hospitality, and was never better pleased than when he could enjoy the Company of Christ and his Followers. The House of *Lazarus* was a common Receptacle for Jesus and his Disciples, where they always met with an hearty Welcome.

AND how was your Worthy Pastor, lately deceas'd, ravish'd with the Company of his Dearest Saviour? How earnestly hath he invited him into his House, and into his Heart, saying, *Enter King of Glory!* With what Complacency and Satisfaction did he converse with Jesus in his private Retirements? and what sweet Visits of Love hath he received from him? And how did he also delight in the Company of good People, especially in the Society of the Ministers of Jesus, who serv'd the same common Lord, and were engag'd
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in the same blessed Work? With what Pleasure did he receive and entertain them in his House, and at his Table?

FINALLY, *Lazarus* was one who appear'd publicly in the Cause of Christ, and own'd and confess'd him *in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation*. Tho' others slighted and despis'd the Great Redeemer, he acknowledged the Dignity of his Person, and paid him a becoming Veneration and Respect. And I am sure that Reverend Person who is lately gone from us was one who shewed a just Zeal and Concern for the Honour of his Saviour; and it was Matter of Grief and Lamentation to him, that *any* should *deny* his DIVINITY, or *lessen* the Grandeur of his Blessed Lord and Master.

II. I AM to shew that Good Men, that the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, must die, as well as others.

GOOD Men, and Good Ministers, the most pious and bountiful, the most publicly useful and beneficial, are not privileged or secur'd from the Arrest of Death; but sooner or later must mount the *pale Horse*, and go the *Way of all the Earth*. — *Your Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live forever? Abraham, the Friend of God, bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost. Lazarus, the Friend of Jesus, fell asleep. Moses, the Servant of the Lord, who talked with him Face to Face, and convers'd with God with a distinguishing Familiarity, was bid to go up to Mount Nebo, and die there. Josh. i. 2. Moses, my Servant, is dead. Job, tho' a Perfect Man, and one who feared God, and eschew'd Evil, yet He says, I know that thou wilt bring me to Death and unto the House appointed for all living, Job xxx. 21.* In this respect, there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked; to the Just and to the Unjust: For they both fall under one common Fate, and are jumbled together in the cold and silent Grave. Indeed the *Sting of Death* is taken away as to Good Men; but they are not exempted from the *Stroke of*
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it. The Apostle tells us, that *By one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin*, Rom. v. 12. Sin hath infus'd that Poison into our Natures, which works surely, and will carry us off at last. God hath said it, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return*; and he will stand to his Word. *There is no Man hath Power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit; neither hath he Power in the Day of Death; and there is no Discharge in that War*; Eccles. viii. 8.

It is true, *Enoch & Elijah*, by uncommon aFvour, were translated alive from Earth to Heaven: But the general Sentence takes place, notwithstanding a few Exceptions. You read, *Gen. v. 24. that Enoch walked with God, & was not; for God took him*. Those Excellent Sermons your worthy Minister preach'd on this Subject seem'd to presage the Manner of his own Death, or the Manner of his going off to a better World. As with *Enoch* he *walked with God*, so the Manner of his Departure look'd very much like a *Translation*. He was rapt up to Heaven in a Moment, in the 'Twinkling of an Eye; an Emblem of the glorious Change which shall pass upon the living Saints at the Last Day. 2 Cor. xv. 51. 52. There says the Apostle, *We shall all be charged in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye*. He scarce felt the Pangs of Death; but goes off calmly without any Struggle or Agony; a Way of Dying most becoming that blissful State he was to enter into, which doth not admit of a Sigh or a Groan. In the Morning he clasp'd his dear Consort in his Arms, expressing his great Affection for her: Then took a few Turns in the Chamber, and afterwards went down into his Study;— And Oh! how sweetly was he surpriz'd to find himself, e'er he was aware, in the Bosom of God's Love, and the Kingdom of his Glory! With *Moses* he had been on the Mount conversing with God; he had engag'd in Private and Family Duty; and not long after he had finished his Devotions, the Fashion of his Countenance alter'd; the Body falls to the Ground; but the Soul

mounts upwards, and is transfigur'd with Glory. And this leads me to the Third General.

III. I AM to enquire, in what respects it is so very desirable to die with Good Men, to die with the Friends and Disciples of Jesus; or, to die like them, in the same Condition, and with the same happy Circumstances. ---*Then said Thomas (which is called Didymus) unto his Fellow-Disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

AND, to prevent Mistakes, I would premise a few Things; as---

1. THAT Death, absolutely consider'd, or consider'd in itself, is not the Object of Desire.

2. THAT we should not desire to die, from a fretful Uneasiness, or an impatient Discontent under the Troubles and Difficulties of the present Life.

3. THAT we should patiently wait God's Time.

1. I WOULD premise, that Death, consider'd in itself, is not the Object of Desire. 2 Cor. v. 4. *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burthen'd; not for that we would be uncloath'd, [no, it is an awful Thing to die.] but cloth'd upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* Death is shocking to Nature, tho' it be a Friend to Grace. It appears in a ghastly Shape, and with a grim Aspect, and therefore is stil'd *The King of Terrors*. Flesh and Blood are apt to recoil, and shrink back, at the Approach of the pale Messenger. Therefore *David*, tho' a Good Man, under Apprehensions of Death, cries out, (*Psa. xxxix. 13.*) *Oh! spare me, that I may recover Strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen.* The Dissolution of the Humane Frame, and the Breaking the dear and intimate Union between Soul and Body, absolutely consider'd, is not the proper Object of Desire.

2. I WOULD premise, that we should not desire to die, from a fretful Uneasiness, or an impatient Discontent, under the Troubles or Difficulties of the present Life. To desire to die, only because we are discontented with our present Circumstances, and are not satisfied with the Allotment of Divine Providence, is criminal and faulty. What is this but to quarrel with our Maker, impeach the Conduct of the Great Sovereign of the World, and charge God foolishly? To wish for Death in a sudden Pang of Grief and Sorrow, when the Hand of God lies heavy upon us, is a Temper very unbecoming a good Christian, who professes to give his firm Assent to the Word of God, which assures us, that *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth, Heb. xii. 6.* and that *all Things shall work together for good to them who are the Called according to his Purpose, Rom. viii. 28.* A passionate Desire of Death, extorted from us purely from the Dint of Affliction, or from a Sense of the Hardships and Difficulties we meet with in the present World, is no way commendable and praise-worthy; but is rather to be censur'd and condemn'd, because it carries in it an indecent Reflection upon God, and his Providence. *Jonah* forgot his Duty, when he murmur'd and repin'd for want of his Gourd, and wish'd for Death, *Jonah* iv. 7, 8. whereas the Psalmist could say, *Tho' he slew me, yet will I trust in him; and, I was dumb, and I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it, Psa. xxxix. 9.*

3. WE should patiently wait God's Time. Good Old *Jacob* could say, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18.* And, *Job* says, *All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait 'till my Change come, Job xiv. 14.* As our Time is in God's Hand, we should not vainly and foolishly attempt to take it from thence, and carve for ourselves. We should be willing to live here as long as we may be useful, and do any Service for God,

and leave him to chuse the Time and Manner of our Departure hence. We should submissively say, *When* God pleases, *as* he pleases, and *how* he pleases. Tho' Paul had a Desire to depart and be with Christ, yet he was willing to abide in the *Flesh*, because it was needful for the *Philippian Churches*: And having this Confidence (I know, says he) that I shall abide and continue with you, for your *Furtherance, and Joy of Faith*, Phil. i. 23, 24, &c.

THESE Things being premis'd, I come now to enquire, in what respects it is so very desirable to die with Good Men, or to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, in the same Condition, and with the same happy Circumstances. And,

1. IT is very desirable to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because *they die in the Lord*.

2. BECAUSE *they rest from their Labours*.

3. BECAUSE they are *deliver'd from the Evil to come*.

4. BECAUSE, upon the Death of the Body, the Soul is immediately receiv'd to the Enjoyment of Christ in Glory.

5. BECAUSE the Death of Good Men is precious in God's Sight. And,

6. BECAUSE, at the Last Day, their Bodies shall be raised up to a glorious Immortality.

1. THEN, it is very desirable to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because they *die in the Lord*; and *blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*. The Saints *die in the Lord*; and Believers *sleep in Jesus*. Lazarus our Friend *sleepeth*.

If

If you ask me, in what Respects the Saints, or the Friends and Disciples of Christ, *die in the Lord*; or in what Respects they *sleep in Jesus*? I answer,

(1.) THEY die in the Faith of Jesus.

(2.) THEY die commending Soul and Body to him:
And,

(3.) THEY die in Union with Jesus.

(1.) THE Saints die in the Faith of Jesus. It is said of the good old Patriarchs, *Heb. xi. 13. These all died in the Faith.* The Saints you read of in the Old Testament died in the Belief of a Jesus to come: And all the Saints which have died since our Saviour's Incarnation died in the Faith of a Jesus already come. All sincere Christians believe in the Lord Jesus. They receive him for their Prince and Saviour: They bow to his Scepter, and depend upon his Sacrifice; and they live and die in this Faith. They die believing *the great Gospel-Record, That God hath given to us eternal Life, and that this Life is in his Son, 1 John v. 11.*

(2.) THE Saints die, committing themselves to Jesus, commending Soul and Body to him. They sleep (as it were) in the Arms of Jesus, and go to Rest leaning on their Beloved. They die boldly, trusting Christ over all; over Soul and Body, over the dying and undying Part, depending on him to keep what they intrust him with, until the Last Day, and to present them faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy. They die, committing their Bodies to his Care and Oversight, to his Trust and Custody, 'till the Resurrection, and commending their Souls to his gracious and merciful Reception. They die like *Stephen*, who fell asleep, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit! Acts vii. 59.*

(3.) THE Saints die in Union with Jesus. They die united to Jesus, as the Members to their Head, as the Wife to her Husband, and as the Branches to the Vine. There is such a near, strong, and intimate Union between Christ and Believers, that Death itself cannot dissolve

dissolve it. Time, which devours all other Things, cannot wear out the firm Bond and Cement by which Christ and Souls are united. The Saints are joined to the Lord Jesus by an indissoluble Union : *Neither Life nor Death* (saith the Apostle) *shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.*

THUS it is very desirable to die like Good Men, like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because such as these *die in the Lord, and sleep in Jesus.* When Good Men die, their Souls go to God, the Fountain of their Happiness, and the Centre of their Eternal Rest; and their Bodies sleep in the Dust, being united to Christ, and feel no Pain or Uneasiness. In the Grave they have as soft a Repose as on a Bed of Down : *For there the Wicked cease from troubling, and there the Weary are at Rest.*

2. IT is very desirable to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because they rest from their Labour : *Blessed are the Dead that die in the Lord;---for they rest from their Labour.* They are discharg'd from all their Toils and Burthens; they are freed from all their Disquietudes and Fatigues; they enter into Peace, and rest in their Beds, each one walking in his Uprightness. The Friends and Disciples of Jesus, when they die, are no longer harrassed with Troubles and Afflictions; they are no longer clogg'd and incumber'd with a Body of Sin and Death; they are no longer expos'd in the Field of Battle, and press thro' a thick Crowd of Spiritual Enemies; they no longer grapple with Corruptions and Temptations; they no longer complain of weary Nights and gloomy Shades: But having run the toilsome Race, they seize the immortal Prize, and enter on a State of perfect Rest, and ineffable Joy and Felicity. Thus Good *Ministers*, when they die, *rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* They no longer work and toil in the Vineyard; they no longer endure Painfulness and Watching; they no longer waste their Strength,
and

and exhaust their Spirits; they no longer sweat, and tug hard, to gain Souls to Jesus; they no longer stretch forth their Hand to a disobedient and a gain-saying People; they no longer wrestle with Principalities and Powers, and grapple with a mighty Contradiction of Sinners; they no longer endure the Insults, Reproaches, and Persecutions of wicked and unreasonable Men, or feel the grating Resentments of a peevish and ill-natur'd World: But their difficult Warfare is accomplish'd, and their Reward is at hand.

3. IT is very desirable to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because such as these, when they die, are deliver'd from the Evil to come. *Isa. lvii. 1. The Righteous perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart; and merciful Men are taken away, none considering that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come.* It is too evident that Iniquity abounds, and the Love of many waxes cold; Christianity runs at a low Ebb, true Piety decays, and serious Godliness is banter'd and ridicul'd by a loose and degenerate Race of Men: Vile Principles and Practices too much prevail among us: And these Things look with a gloomy Aspect, and are sometimes the Forerunners of sore Calamities and dreadful Judgments. And many Times Good People are hous'd before a Storm, and get into the Harbour before the Winds and the Waves roar, and proclaim a rapid Tempest. The *Righteous* are many Times deliver'd from the *Evil to come*. Our Saviour had told his Disciples, that they were to meet with many severe Hardships and bitter Sufferings in the World; and perhaps *Thomas*, being appal'd at the frightful Prospect, was willing to go off in Season, and so escape the windy Storm and Tempest. He knew *Lazarus* was got out of all Danger; therefore says he, *Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

4. IT is very desirable to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because, upon the Death of their Bodies,

dies, their Souls are immediately receiv'd to the Enjoyment of Christ in Glory. Thus *Paul* had a *Desire to depart, and be with Christ*. And oh! what an happy State is it to be with Jesus, and behold his Glory! to enjoy the sweet and ravishing Smiles and Company of that Saviour, *who loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood*. It was *St. Austin's* Wish, that he might have seen Christ in the Flesh: But surely it is infinitely better to see him in Glory.

5. IT is very desirable to die like the Saints, like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because the Death of Good Men is precious in God's Sight. *Psa. cxvi. 15. Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints*. A Good Man dies under the Influence and Management of a kind and distinguishing Providence. His Soul, when it leaves the Body, is committed to a bright Guard of Angels, to conduct it to Mansions of Glory: And his Body, when it drops into the Grave, is kept safe there as in a Dormitory, until it shall be called out of its Slumber on the Morning of the Resurrection. His Grave is perfum'd, and his Dust is sacred and precious in God's Sight; who knows how to gather the scatter'd Particles, to rebuild the Tabernacle of the Body, and who will raise it up in exquisite Beauty and Order at the Last Day. Therefore,

6. IT is very desirable to die like the Friends and Disciples of Jesus, because, at the Last Day, their Bodies shall be raised up to a glorious Immortality. Those frail Bodies of the Saints, those impotent Pieces of Clay, which are lodged in the Dust, shall be quicken'd and rais'd, put on immortal Vigour, and live forever: The Gospel hath brought *Life and Immortality to Light*. This hath open'd a glorious Scene to our View, and shewed us that which was not to be discover'd by the glimmering Light of Nature. The *Resurrection of the Body* is an Article not to be found in the Pagan Creed. This is a
Mystery

Mystery unknown to the Heathens: Therefore, when they buried their Dead, all was dark and gloomy about them: They thought their Friends were laid up in perpetual Oblivion and eternal Obscurity. But We Christians have a brighter Prospect, and are assur'd that this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal shall put on Immortality. We have a sure Word of Prophecy to depend upon, which informs us that the Bodies of the Saints shall rise again, spring up to a new Life, and be beautified and adorn'd with the most glorious and shining Qualities. *Job xix. 25, 26, &c. I know (says Job) that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. And tho' after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another; tho' my Reins be consumed within me.*

I am (says Christ) the Resurrection and the Life: He that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live, John xi. 25. And Paul assures us, that when the Lord Jesus shall come down from Heaven, he shall change the vile Bodies of the Saints, that they may be fashioned like unto his own glorious Body, Phil. iii. 20, 21. Thus It is sown in Corruption; it is raised in Incorruption: It is sown in Dishonour; it is raised in Glory: It is sown in Weakness; it is raised in Power: It is sown a Natural Body; it is raised a Spiritual Body; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

IV. *Ult.* I proceed to apply the Whole. And from the Subject I have been insisting on we may learn:

1. That the Death of a Good Man is very justly and deservedly lamented.
2. That the dearest Friends, sooner or later, must part.
3. What little Reason have we to be fond of our Stay here.
4. Heaven

4. Heaven is worth dying for. And,

5. *Ult.* The suddēh Death of our Friends calls aloud upon us to prepare to follow.

1. Then, from the Subject I have been insisting upon, we may learn, that the Death of a Good Man is very justly and deservedly lamented. No Wonder, when so Worthy and Good a Man as *Lazarus* was dead, that *Thomas* was so passionately affected with the invaluable Loss, bewails his Death, and talks of going, that he might die with him. Nay, *Jesus* himself wept over *Lazarus's* Tomb: When he saw the Grave, he burst out into Tears. *When Jesus saw Mary, the Sister of the Deceased, weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled; and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept; John xi. 33, 34, 35.* You read of the Proto-Martyr *Stephen*, that devout Men carried him to his Burial, and made great Lamentation over him, *Acts viii. 2.* Thus you have an Account, that when *Samuel*, that holy Man, and famous Prophet of the Lord, died, *all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his House at Ramah, 1 Sam. xxv. 1.* And when good Ministers die, their Death justly calls for a Tribute of Mourning and Lamentation. And when your faithful and beloved Pastor was taken from you, how was the Town cloth'd in Sables? Every Countenance deservedly put on a visible Concern; every Eye weeping, and every Heart bleeding; sorrowing most of all that you should hear his charming Voice, and see his pleasing Countenance, no more. And surely Tears are due to the Hearse of such a Friend, and such a Minister. But *he being dead yet speaketh*: And methinks I see him turn about, and bespeak you in the Language our Saviour address'd himself to the *Daughters of Jerusalem*, who followed him with Tears in their Eyes, saying, *Weep not for*

for me; but weep for your selves and your Children. The pious Soul, no doubt, is safely lodg'd in *Abraham's Bosom*, and enter'd into a State of perfect Rest, and ineffable Joy and Felicity. But O vast unspeakable Loss to the Church of God, especially to this Town! Surely a Great and Good Man is now fallen in *Israel*; and your Strength is in some measure departed! It looks like an ill Omén, when God is calling of such Eminent Ministers, in the Season of their Vigour and Usefulness. This is a very awful and awakening Providence: Oh! *Hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it*, and learn Instruction. Make a better Improvement of the Labours of Ministers for the future: *Be watchful, and strengthen the Things which remain, that are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2.* Methinks, God is addressing you as he did *Jerusalem* of Old: *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee, Jer. vi. 8.*

2. From the Subject I have been insisting upon, we may learn, that the dearest Friends, sooner or later, must part, The Disciples of Jesus, who are closely united by the Bond of mutual Affection and Endearments, must be separated from each other. There is a Time when the most intimate Associates, when the dearest Friends, and Brethren in the Ministry, must shake Hands, and bid Farewel. Death makes a Separation between *Thomas* and *Lazarus*, between *Jonathan* and *David*. This makes a Separation between Brother and Sister, between Parents and Children, between Husband and Wife. When any of our Friends or Relations die, they are broken off from our Society; *We shall go to them; but they shall not return to us,*

3. Then what little Reason have we to be fond of our Stay here. While in this wretched and changeable World, we live at the greatest Uncertainties. Our Joys are soon turn'd into Sorrows, and our Tranquility and Repose frequently interrupted by some ungrateful Acci-

dent or other: Besides the Doublings of Corruption, and the repeated Assaults of Temptations, which a Good Man is liable to while here. And methinks these Things should teach us to hang loose to the World, if not excite us to *wish for Wings like a Dove, that we might fly away, and be at Rest.* Therefore,

4. HEAVEN is worth dying for. Our Treasure and Happiness is in Heaven; and our best Friends dwell above. There dwells the Blessed GOD, incompass'd with dazzling Beams of Light and Glory: There dwells an Exalted Saviour: There dwell Glorious Angels and Glorious Saints: There dwell the faithful Ministers of Christ, who are gone off the Stage of this Life, and all our pious Relations and Acquaintance, who are *departed in the Faith.* And is it not worth dying to see and converse with such agreeable and endearing Company? What Charms must there needs be in the pleasing Sight, and in the heavenly Conversation? Is it not worth dying, to go and see the Face of God, and be satisfy'd with the Light of his Countenance? To go and see a beloved Saviour; to be where Jesus is, and behold his Glory? To go and see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets and Apostles, and all the Saints and Martyrs, in the Kingdom of God? Is it not worth dying, to arrive at Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect: To be join'd to the bright Assembly of Glorified Spirits, who are perfect in Peace and Love? Is it not worth dying, to have the same beautiful Image drawn in Perfection upon the Soul; to be clad in the same shining Array; to appear without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing; to put on the same happy Temper; to tune
the

the same Golden Harps ; to bear a Part in the same Transports of Joy, and loud Anthems of Praise ; to sit and sing, and love as they ? Is not this Happiness worth dying for ? And, as an Addition to the Felicity of the Saints in Heaven, they shall have a clear and distinct Knowledge of one another. When we are got up to this blessed Society, we shall be able to say, *This is my dear Brother ! This is my dear Sister ! This is my dear Father ! This is my dear Child ! This is my dear Pastor ! This is my dear Friend !* and the like. Nay, when we get up to Heaven, we shall know those whom we never saw in the Flesh. We shall be able to say, *This is Enoch, who walked with God, and was translated. This is Abraham, the Friend of God. This is Moses, the Servant of the Lord, who talked with him on Mount Sinai, and went up to Mount Nebo, and died there. This is David, the Man after God's own Heart. This is Samuel the Prophet : And this is Paul the Apostle. This is Stephen the Martyr. This is John the Beloved Disciple ;* and the like. And is it not worth dying, to see and enjoy such Blessed Company, and to live and be happy with them forever ? *Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

5. *Ult.* The sudden Death of our Friends calls aloud upon us to prepare to follow. *Thomas* seem'd surpriz'd with the melancholly, unexpected Tydings of the Death of *Lazarus*, his Friend, and Fellow-Disciple. It was but just before Christ and his Disciples had heard that he was sick ; and soon after *Thomas* hath Notice of his Death. Oh ! the Vanity of Man, as Mortal ! What a frail uncertain Thing is the Life of Man ! How quickly is the Vapour scatter'd, and the Bubble broken ! How soon does the Flower fade, and the Shadow flee away ! You have an awful and affecting Instance of this in the Death of your beloved Pastor. *Be ye also ready : For in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh, Math. xxiv. 44. Boast not thyself of To-morrow ; for thou knowest not what a Day may bring*

bring forth. Thou knowest not what an Hour, nay, a Minute, or a Moment, may bring forth. *Tho' in the midst of Life, we are in Death.* You know not how soon, or how suddenly, you may be call'd into another World. Oh! make no Delays; but haste, and set all Things in Order. Seeing you know not the Time of your Lord's Coming, whether at Midnight, at Cock-crowing, in the Morning, at Noon, or in the Evening; do not give out yourselves to a spiritual Slumber; but *watch and pray*; rouse up your drowsy Faculties, and awaken all the Powers of your Souls, to prepare, *lest, coming suddenly, he should find you sleeping.* Let your Loins be girded about, and let your Lights be burning, and ye yourselves like unto Men that wait for their Lord; that when he cometh and knocketh, you may open to him immediately. Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching, Luke xii. 35, 36, &c.

As for the *Suddenness* of the Death of your pious and excellent Minister, doubtless, it was no Surprisal to him, his Soul being dress'd and ready, and its Wings expanded, and prepar'd to take Flight to the blissful Mansions above. And it is worth remarking, that many bright and eminent Ministers have gone off this Way. Thus died Mr. *Vines*, Mr. *Ambrose*, Mr. *Flavell* of *Dartmouth*, Mr. *Trosse* of *Exeter*, Mr. *Pope* of *Bristol*, and many other Excellent Worthies, whose Praises are in the Churches. And it is the Opinion of Divines, That Sudden Death, to a Good Man, to a prepared Soul, is the best Way of going off. ' For my own Part (says Mr. *Taylor*, in a Funeral Sermon for Mr. *Vincent*) ' on ' mature Deliberation, I do not think it a desirable ' Thing for a Good Man, who is ready for Death, to ' be worn away like a Stone by a continual Drop- ' ping. May my House and Soul be in Order; and ' the sooner it quits this vile Body, and leaves this ' wretched World, if in the Twinkling of an Eye, so ' much the better. To which there is but one Cir- ' cumstance

‘ cumstance more that I would desire may be added, viz. That I may die preaching the everlasting Gospel, or administering the Lord’s-Supper. May my Taper be blown out in the Sanctuary; and may I presently pass, in an Instant, from serving the Church Militant here on Earth, to join with the Church Triumphant in Heaven.’ But he adds, ‘ We must not be our own Chusers;--- and to be sure God will dispose all Things in the best manner for those that are his.’ Tho’ his Lamp was not blown out in the Sanctuary, yet he had his Desire, in some measure; for he died in his Sleep.

As to a good Man, sudden Death may be very desirable, and that upon several Accounts. By such a quick Way of Dying, the pious Soul gets loose at once from the Temptations of Satan, and the Hurries and Allurements of the World; gives one finishing Blow to all her Spiritual Enemies, and so shoots triumphant to the Palace of Glory above. Whereas, when the Christian lies languishing on a Sick Bed, and makes slow Approaches to the Grave, the Devil is many Times very busy to disturb and molest the Soul with violent Temptations: And tho’ he can’t keep it out of Heaven, yet he endeavours to make its Passage thither very gloomy and uncomfortable. The World likewise is many Times a great Clog to the Christian, when he goes off by a lingering Sickness. This many Times sticks too close, and makes the Soul too unwilling to depart. I might add, that by sudden Death a Good Man escapes the Pains and Languishments, the Tortures and Agonies, of a sharp or lingring Disease; and does not feel that killing Sorrow and Anguish which, many Times, attend Parting with weeping Friends and Relations. Oh! what Miseries have some endured before they have left the World! And suppose a Man’s Last and dying Sickness should not be attended with Extremity of Pain; yet when he lies languishing upon a Sick Bed, (as one observes) the Tears and bitter Lamentations

mentations of Friends are apt to strike deep, and infuse an additional Bitterness into the Cup. When the Curtains are drawn, the Room darken'd, Tapers burning, all around look pale and dejected, bewailing, sighing and lamenting, it many Times very tenderly affects the sick Person, and cuts him to the Heart. This is all Gloominess and Horror. Let a Man die in a Minute, or an Hour, and all this is prevented. *Pompa Mortis magis terret quam Mors ipsa*; The Pomp of Death, or the melancholy and gloomy Retinue which attends it, is more ghastly & terrifying than Death itself. Our deceased Friend, going off in a Moment *, felt none of these uneasy Impressions: He slips out of the World without the doleful Ceremony of shaking Hands, and bidding a sad and final Adieu, and is surpris'd into Glory.

And as God orders every Thing wisely and graciously for his own Servants, surviving Relations should not repine at the Manner of his Departure, or struggle with Divine Providence; but study Patience and Submission. If so minute a Thing as an Hair of the Head does not fall from it without our Heavenly Father, much less does the Body sink and drop into the Grave. Tho' the Suddenness of his Death was an aggravating Circumstance to his Friends, yet it was no Disadvantage to Him. No sooner the Body drop'd to the Ground, but the Soul was wafted to Paradise. As I observ'd before, many Eminent Servants of Jesus have died suddenly: And thus died your incomparable Minister the Revd. Mr. *BARTLET*. Like *Elijah* he was caught up to Heaven, tho' not in a fiery Chariot. I trust, he was a
Spiritual

* The Morning he died, he rose about Eight a-Clock, and went down from his Chamber into his Study, which was a Lower Room, and pray'd in Secret, and pray'd in his Family; then broke Fast upon Tea and Bread and Butter; and some Time after remained in his Study, and talk'd with his Sister; and on a sudden drops from his Chair, and expires in a Moment, without a Sigh or a Groan.

Spiritual Father to many in this Place: And may each of these lament the inconceivable Loss, and cry out as *Elisha* did, when his Master was taken from him, *My Father, my Father! the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof!* While he lived, he was a publick Blessing, and contributed to the Support of the Church and Nation: He bore the Interest of the Publick very near his Heart, and was deeply concern'd for the Welfare of *Sion*. He was a useful Pillar in the Temple of God below; and now he is fix'd as a *Pillar in the Temple of Glory above*; and shall never go out any more. He was a burning and a shining Light; and for a Season you rejoiced in that Light: This beautiful Lamp is not extinguish'd, but remov'd to shine in an higher Orb: For they that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever, *Dan. xii. 3.*

As to the Character of that Reverend Person, who once labour'd among you, and is now gone to receive his Reward, I must own, I am at a Loss how to describe him in his proper Colours. I want his Masterly Hand to draw the amiable Picture, and set him forth in his native Lustre and Excellency. ' Indeed, if Love could, ' make me eloquent, I could use all the Beauties of ' Language, and Flowers of Rhetorick, to adorn his ' Memory. But I think a plain Account of him is the best *Encomium*. I shall briefly consider him in a Private, Social, and Publick Capacity; as a *Christian*, a *Friend*, and a *Minister*.

As a *Christian*; He did not make Religion a By-Business; but the grand Work and principal Concern of Life. He sat out well, and in the Morning of his Age, and the Excellency of his Strength, bound himself to God by a solemn League and Covenant, which he committed to Writing, and set his Hand to it. This secret Transaction between God and his Soul was found since his Death, and carries in it the evident Marks of a profound Humility, great Sincerity, and the most awful

Reverence and Seriousness. And as he vow'd to be the Lord's, so he *walked before him in Truth, and with a perfect Heart.* As he list'd himself under the Banner of Christ, so he fought manfully against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. With what Care and Watchfulness did he guard against the Snares and Temptations of Satan, against the Allurements of the World, and against all Fleshly Lusts and Corruptions. The Law of God was the sacred Rule he walk'd by, and Christ the noble Pattern and fair Original he copied after. An orient Constellation of Divine Graces sparkled in his Soul, and the Virtues of the Holy Jesus shin'd bright in his Conduct and Behaviour. This *Man of God* manifested that *Wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy.* How conspicuous and exemplary was he for Humility and Meekness, for Candour and Charity, for Self-denial and a Contempt of the World? He did not affect an haughty and disdainful Air, or *lord it over God's Heritage*; but managed the Affairs of the Church with Prudence and Discretion, and with Temper and Mildness. He did not pretend to a *Dominion over your Faith*, but was an *Helper of your Joy.* He had put on *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, was more ready to forgive an Injury than retaliate, and *in Patience possess'd his Soul.* He was always dispos'd to put the best Sense, and the most candid and favourable Construction, upon the Words and Actions of others. His Soul was too great and large to confine his Regards to a Party; his Charity was as extensive as the Holy Catholick Church; and he lov'd all Good Men, and Good Ministers, of whatsoever Character or Denomination; and frequently pray'd for them, whether they did Conform or did not Conform. He was very remarkable for his Contempt and Indifference as to the Things of the World: For when he had great Advantages offer'd him, particularly from *Exeter* and from *Bristol*, notwithstanding his growing Family, he

he refus'd the tempting Proposals, and was willing to spend his Life and Labours in this Town. *Ye are Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, he behaved himself among you.* He was an *Example of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.* And as he shewed a good Conversation in the Sight of Men, so he delighted much in Communion with God in Secret. He kept close to his stated Retirements, and gave out himself to secret Meditation and Prayer.

I might consider him in his Social Capacity, as a Friend or a Visitant. And how affable and courteous was his Behaviour! how kind and condescending his Deportment! how chearful and innocent, how agreeable and entertaining, his Conversation! how useful and instructive was his Advice and Counsel! And how free and ready was he, upon all Occasions, to serve and oblige! Many have sustain'd a great Loss in his Death on this Score, who want a trusty Friend, and a faithful Guide and Counsellour.

But to come to his Publick Character as a Minister of the Gospel. And in this Capacity he appear'd with a distinguishing Lustre, and shin'd as a Star of the First Magnitude in the Church of God. He had a Noble Furniture of Mind for his Work; many Learned Accomplishments, and Eminent Gifts and Graces. He had a solid Judgment, a ready Invention, a bright Fancy, and an inimitable Felicity of Elocution. His Stile was short and sententious, but pleasant and sprightly; His Sermons judicious and practical; his Language warm and affecting. How instructive his Expositions! how edifying his Discourses! how sweet his Voice! how kind and earnest his Sollicitations! how awful his Warnings! how pressing his Motives and Arguments! and how plain and proper his Directions! Surely, Sinners must be obdurate to the last Degree, and frozen in their Tombs, that could not harken to the melodious Voice of so skilful and alluring a Charmer. In what terrifying Figures hath he set forth the Torments of Hell, and shewed you the dreadful Gulf, and begg'd you with Tears to avoid the fatal Road which leads thither? In what beautiful Colours hath he display'd the Joys

of Heaven, and charg'd you to tread the shining Path which leads to the blissful Mansions above? How hath he unveil'd the Glories of the invisible World, set Paradise in your View, and invited you to come and eat of the Tree of Life? Oh! what divine Lectures hath he read to you! and what sacred Truths and heavenly Instructions hath he laid before you! How powerful and moving was he in Preaching; and how devout and affectionate in Prayer! On what fervent Wings hath his Soul, in this Duty, mounted up to Heaven, and drawn you up in pious Thoughts, and divine Aspirations after him! Can you forget his solemn Admonitions, his kind Invitations, his melting Expressions, and sweet Enlargements, at the Lord's Table? He was Excellent in Publick Prayer and Preaching; but at a Sacrament he seem'd to out-do Himself. I think, few Ministers had such a peculiar Art as he to fix the Thoughts, inflame the Affections, and rouse the Sacramental Graces to a lively and vigorous Exercise. It is true, it is the *Spirit that quickens*; He is the principal Efficient; And yet God makes use of Instruments to administer Edification, Quickening, and Comfort to his People. His Catechetical Lectures were plain and edifying: And I doubt not but many Young People in this Place have Reason to bless God for them.

To all this I might add, That as he was always ready to give Spiritual Counsel and Advice, and free and familiar with those that waited upon him; so he had an admirable Skill that Way. He could speak a Word in Season to the Trembling Soul; he could inform the Ignorant, resolve the Doubting, cheer the Drooping, strengthen the Weak, and comfort the Feeble-minded. Like a wise *Shepherd*, he knew how to guide the *Flock*, how to feed *Christ's Sheep*; and was ready to gather the *Lambs in his Arms*, and gently lead those that were *Young*.

Thus I have given a short and imperfect *Character* of your eminently Worthy *Minister*. If you would have a more particular Account of him, I might refer you to his *Diary*, or to some private Notes he hath left behind him, relating to Himself; which contain solemn Reflections upon the State and Workings of his own Soul; serious Reviews of his own Conduct and Deportment; several Remarks on his Bodily Disorders, and his broken State of Health; and on the Goodness of God to him in his Journeys; the tender Regard he had for his Family, especially for their Spiritual Welfare; his hearty Concern for the Church of God, and the Publick Interest

Innereſt of the Nation; his Gratitude to his Benefactors, eſpecially to a Good God who inclin'd their Hearts to be kind to him: To which I might add, his Obſervations on the Death of ſome particular Friends, and his Concern to prepare to follow.

Theſe Notes, written with his own Hand, would furniſh me with a further Account of your Excellent Miniſter, in all the Particulars I have mentioned; but theſe Remarks being deſign'd for his own Uſe, and in ſome Places not very legible, I can propoſe only to give you a few Hints relating to this Matter.

I find, by his private Notes, that he frequently enquired into the State of his own Soul, and made Remarks on its Frame and Temper in Holy Duties, eſpecially on the Lord's-Day, more particularly at the Lord's-Table. If he found any ſweet Reſreſhments at a Sacrament, he would break out into Raptures of Praise and Thankſgiving. If his Spirit was ſtreighten'd, and Corruption prevail'd, he would lament over dead and dull Affections, and beg Pardon thro' the Blood of Chriſt. Under a Senſe of his Defects and Comings ſhort, he would often, with great Humility and a lively Faith, caſt himſelf on the Infinite Merits of his Saviour. As often as he vow'd to keep cloſer to God and his Duty, ſo often he would earneſtly pray God to help him to be faithful.

Juſt after a Sacrament, he expreſſes himſelf thus: 'Oh! what Reason have I to admire the Goodneſs of God to me, the worſt of Sinners! If my Heart don't deceive me, I hope, I had ſweet Communion with God to-day at the Lord's Table. I felt my Heart wonderfully enlarg'd; and methought it was a moſt ſweet Time. Oh! that I may evidence the Reality of my Communion with God by the Fruits of it! And if Sacraments be ſo ſweet and delightful to me, what will Heaven be?' At other Times, after Sacrament, he would bewail his Wanderings, and fly to God, thro' the Blood of Jeſus, for pardoning Grace and Mercy.

He often took ſerious Reviews of his own Conduct and Behaviour. In the Evening he would recollect where he had been, in what Company, and how he manag'd and behav'd himſelf; and would make ſuitable Reflections, and put up to God ſuitable Prayers and Thankſgivings. He made ſeveral Remarks on his Bodily Diſorders, and his broken State of Health. He took particular Notice of the Time when the Oppreſſion in his Breſt firſt ſeiz'd him, and obſerv'd the Progreſs of that Diſorder, and alſo of his Hoarſe: And when he felt his Indiſpoſi-

ons to increafe, he pray'd, ' The Lord fanctify all thefe Warn-
' ings! It was a Grief to him to be detained by his Diforders
from Publick Ordinances. On this Occafion he writes, ' I am
' God's Prifoner at home: May filent Sabbaths greatly inſtruct
' me! When at any Time the Streightnefs and Oppreffion of
his Breafte abated, and he had a comfortable Night, he would
affectionately blefs God for it in the Morning. He was fo much
bent upon his Maſter's Work, that it was a Trouble to him to
be indispos'd for Service: And when he had Health and
Strength, he was truly thankful, and heartily willing to employ
it for God. Upon the Abatement of his Malady, and his be-
ing reſtor'd to a tolerable Degree of Health and Eaſe, he crys
out: ' Oh! what ſhall I render? Oh! that I may improve my
' Health for God!

He makes grateful Remarks on the Goodnefs of God towards
him in his Journeys. As he uſually commended himſelf and
his Family to God before he ſat forth, ſo, upon his ſafe Return,
he would *pay his Vows unto the moſt High*. He had a very
tender Regard for his Family, eſpecially for their Spiritual
Welfare. The Children God gave him were very ſolemnly de-
voted to their Great Creator; and how many fervent Prayers
and Petitions did he put up to Heaven for them? In his Ad-
dreffes to God, he would not pray for the Great Things of the
World for them; but he would pray for *great Grace*. In his
private Notes, he writes, in one Place, that in his Morning
Devotions, he ' found ſweet Enlargements in Duty, and in
' dedicating his Family and Children, one by one, to God.
Surely the Children of ſuch a Father *have a Bleſſing in Store*
for them.

He bore on his Breafte the Welfare of *Zion*, and was deeply
concern'd for the Church of God. It made his Heart to bleed,
to think on the languishing State of Religion in our Days, and
earnestly pray'd for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*. To ſee Deifm and
Infidelity prevail among ſome, and Arianifm, or ſomething like
it, among others, made a tender Impreſſion upon his generous
Soul, and gave him a very melancholy Proſpect: Upon this he
writes: ' The Lord pity us, and lead us in the Way of Truth
' and Peace, and avert his Wrath!

The Publick Intereſt of the Nation was dear to him;
and when, in the late War, an Invaſion was intended from
Spain, he obſerv'd every Step of the Procedure, as he ſaw it
advic'd on the News-papers; and put up ſuitable and fervent
Addreffes to Heaven, and pray'd importunately, that God would
blaſt

blast the Designs of our Enemies. And oh! how was he surpriz'd with Joy, when the Enterprize was defeated, and the Project prov'd vain and abortive? When the Wind most remarkably favour'd us, being directly against the *Spanish* Fleet, he remarks that it was very justly call'd, *A Protestant Wind*: And adds; 'Oh! what a Good God do we serve! and what a Great God, whom Winds and Sea obey! Oh! that *Britain's* God may have the Glory!

As for the Regard he had to his Benefactors, he kept up a grateful Sense of their Kindness and Generosity towards him, and was very particular and affectionate in his Prayers to God for them.

Last of all, I might add, that he made Remarks on the Death of some particular Friends, and manifested a deep Concern to *prepare to follow*. Of one he writes: 'At such a Time God took away a particular Friend, with whom I had a special Intimacy (Mr. D. D.). I hope he made a good End. May I hasten my Preparations. O my Soul, Death is at the Door!

And thus I have given you some Account of that Excellent Minister, who is taken from you. He was a *Good Man, and full of the Holy-Ghost, and of Faith*; and by his sacred Ministrations, much People (in this Place) have been added to the Lord. He descended from Worthy Ancestors: His Father and Grandfather being both Celebrated for Piety and Usefulness. And surely he himself has added to the Glory of the Family. **BARTLET** is a Name precious in this Town, and shall be transmitted with Honour to Posterity: For the Memory of the Just is blessed.

What shall I say to the disconsolate Widow, and the mournful Relations? Shall I address you in his own Language? — *Silence and Submission become depending Creatures*. Oh! consider, he is not lost but gone before. He is gone to enter into the Joy of his dearest Saviour, whom he lov'd, serv'd, and honour'd, while here below. It is true, the Body lies rotting in the Grave: But if we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him: For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven, with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trumpet of God; and the Dead in Christ shall rise First. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these Words; 1 Thes. iv. 14, 16, &c.

What

What shall I say to the People? Oh! never forget the excellent Sermons you have heard; but call to Remembrance the former Times, and improve and practice. Oh! follow the sacred Instructions he hath left with you, and believe and obey the Gospel he preach'd; and then you and your deceased Minister shall be Joy, and a Cause of Rejoicing, to each other in the Great Day of Account.

F I N I S.

ERRATA. In the Preface, *pa. iv. line 3. from the Bottom,* dele here. *p. viii. l. 4, from the Bottom, for spiritual read brightly.*



